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ABSTRACT

Using Getzels' conceptual model of the school as a social system and Spindler's dichotomy of traditional and emergent values, the researcher proposed the following research questions: (1) Are there significant differences in the values of teachers, principals, and parents? and (2) Is there a higher degree of congruency in values among teachers, principals, and parents in the successful goal-attaining schools than in the less successful goal-attaining schools? The sample of 8 schools was chosen from 18 elementary schools in Southern California. These schools had been rated on the degree to which they developed a goal-attaining process, referred to as Dialogue, Decision-Making, and Action. All teachers and principals were administered the Differential Values Inventory. Thirty families, chosen at random in each school, were also sent a copy of the questionnaire. Two-tailed t-tests and the Mann-Whitney U Test were utilized to test the null hypotheses. Two of the major findings were as follows: (1) teachers, principals, and parents were shown to have significantly different values; however, while parents had the most traditional values, teachers had more traditional values than principals; and (2) no significant differences were found in value congruency among teachers, principals, and parents for the two types of schools. (Author)

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CONGRUENCY OF VALUES AMONG TEACHERS, PRINCIPALS, AND PARENTS AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO THE GOAL-ATTAINING PROCESS[1]

By

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INTRODUCTION:

Americans, for the first time since the Progressive movement of the 1930's, have begun to lose confidence in public education. The common interest that has traditionally bound parents, teachers, and administrators together has so weakened that there are those who are anticipating the decline of public education in the United States. As of yet, no one has isolated from the myriad factors surrounding this problem any one major cause or combination of causes that will account totally for this loss of confidence in the schools. Surely, the public's refusal to provide the schools with adequate financial support is not merely due to a massive rebellion against increasing taxes.

One explanation for the diminishing confidence of the public's support of public education may be the result of a major shift of values in our society. Teachers and administrators, many times thought of as adversaries, may now have a new antagonist: the American public. A shift of

CG 006 154

values in our culture may well have pitted not only teachers and administrators against each other, but have caused the public to view both teachers and administrators with disdain.

If a difference of values exists both within the school and between the school and its clients, then the remedy to improve the many inadequacies in our schools cannot be solved only by additional funds. The identification and explanation of the values of administrators, teachers, and parents are prerequisite to each group's understanding of how and why the other groups behave as they do.

In addition to the identification of each group's values, there is a need to answer the following basic question: how do the values of the individuals in an organization affect that organization in achieving its goals? Applying this question to an educational setting, we must know whether a congruency of values among parents, teachers, and administrators is related to the ability of schools to operate effectively, i.e., to develop a responsive mechanism for achieving school goals.

LITERATURE ON VALUES:

One weakness of many past studies done on values has been that researchers have not used an instrument which was the outgrowth of any real theory of values. With the exception of three instruments, Allport-Vernon's "Study of Values,"[2] Kluckhohn's Value Orientation Interview Schedule,[3] and Prince's Differential Values Inventory,[4] none of the studies over the past thirteen years have used instruments which were the natural outcome of any comprehensive, theoretical postulates on values.

The major criticism of the Allport-Vernon instrument is that it is derived from Eduard Spranger's six ideal value types: the theoretical, economic, aesthetic, social, political, or religious man. However, the instrument, in all actuality, measures six different areas of interest, and not six different types of values. Only the Value Orientation Interview Schedule and the Differential Values Inventory really measure value orientations of individuals. However, it is the bias of this researcher to feel that while both the Kluckhohn and the Prince instruments are based on substantive theory and both measure values as defined as "a conception, explicit or implicit, distinctive of an individual or characteristic of a group, of the desirable which influences the selection from available modes, means, and ends of action,"[5] the Prince instrument is the superior one. The theory underlying the Differential Values Inventory is, of course, that which was first put forth by George Spindler in his essay, "Education in a Transforming American Culture."[6] This essay was influenced by David Riesman's The Lonely Crowd, a work that has explained much of man's behavior during the first half of the twentieth century.[7] Since the Prince instrument really measures whether an individual is Inner-Directed or Other-Directed, much more can be said as to how and why individuals with these values will behave as they do and what possible effect they will have on an organization.

In all the studies using the Differential Values Inventory as the instrument to measure values, none of the researchers have taken advantage of the fact that Prince, in constructing the instrument, wrote items which reflected the eight categories or dimensions as suggested by Spindler. Instead, the researchers in these studies measured individuals only to the extent to which they were traditional or emergent.

In this study, the researcher has, in addition, measured individuals on all eight dimensions: Work-Success Ethic, Puritan Morality, Individualism, Future-Time Orientation, Ethic of Sociability, Relative Morality, Conformity, and Present-Time Orientation. By using the eight value categories, the researcher hoped to show that individuals in our society should not be considered either as traditional or emergent.

Also, despite the many studies using the Differential Values Inventory,[8] none of the research designs have included the measurement of a school-community's values. While the Differential Values Inventory studies, taken together, have collected a substantial amount of knowledge regarding teachers' and principals' values, none of the studies have attempted to measure the values of parents. This vacuum of knowledge about school-communities' values has greatly diminished the importance of past studies on values of schools, for it is now axiomatic in our turbulent age that no organization, especially the public school, can function effectively without the cooperation and the consent of the clients who utilize it, and, to a great extent, depend upon its services.

RESEARCH PROCEDURES:

The sample of eight schools was chosen from the League of Cooperating Schools, eighteen elementary schools in Central and Southern California, all of which had committed themselves to some form of change or innovation. These eighteen schools had, over a period of four years, been rated by the Institute for the Development of Educational Activities (/I/D/E/A/) on the degree to which they developed a goal-attaining process, referred to as Dialogue, Decision-Making, and Action, which was

thought to lead to school change. Four schools were chosen which had been the most successful in developing this process and four which had been least successful. A pilot school, chosen from the same population, served as the test school for the data collection.

All teachers and principals were administered the Differential Values Inventory. Thirty families, chosen at random in each school's attendance area, were also sent a copy of the questionnaire. Ninety-two percent of the questionnaires were returned from parents, and over 95 percent were returned from teachers.

Several revisions were made of the instrument from the final form as used by Richard Prince. One alteration was to add forced choice items (D and E) after the original forced-choice items (A and B). These new items gave the respondent an opportunity to state whether their choice between items A and B was difficult or easy. Another revision involved several minor alterations of the words in the instrument to make it appropriate for parents. (These word modifications were retained in the questionnaires filled out by principals and teachers.) The final revision of the Differential Values Inventory made by the researcher was to have the questionnaire translated into Spanish. In five of the nine communities, there were enough Spanish-speaking families to warrant this change.

The scoring of the instrument took into account whether the choice was difficult or easy for the respondent to make. If the choice were easy, the respondent received a score of two; if the choice were difficult, the respondent received a score of one. Each score was placed in one of the eight value categories.

ANALYSIS:

The researcher first wanted to identify the values of parents, teachers, and principals. Using Spindler's continuum of traditionalism and emergentism[9] as well as findings from past studies which utilized the Differential Values Inventory, the researcher hypothesized that parents would be the most traditional, followed then by principals, and followed lastly by teachers. This hypothesis was tested by a two-tailed t-test, and the significance level was considered to be at the .05 level or less.

In addition, the researcher also hypothesized that a higher degree of congruency in values among teachers, principals, and parents would be found in more successful goal-attaining schools than in less successful goal-attaining schools. This hypothesis was tested by using the Mann-Whitney U test, and the significance level of .05 or less was accepted as representing significant differences.

Demographic data were also collected in order to test whether any of the following variables were highly correlated with traditional-emergent values of teachers and parents: (1) age; (2) highest grade level completed in school; (3) family income; and (4) number of organizations of which one is a member (professional and non-professional). In addition, the researcher wished to discover how much contact teachers and parents had with one another. Because of the special nature of the sample, the researcher did not hypothesize any relationships between these variables and traditional-emergent values.

FINDINGS:

Significant differences in values were found among teachers, principals, and parents. However, while parents were the most traditional in their values, teachers were more traditional in their values than principals. This finding did not support Spindler's continuum of traditionalism and emergentism in which he assumed that teachers would be less traditional than principals.

However, one must keep in mind that this study consisted of a unique sample of elementary schools. The explanation of why the eight principals were shown to be less traditional in their values than teachers may be that all the League of Cooperating Schools were committed to the goal of innovation. In order to reach this goal, these principals felt they must allow teachers to experiment with new programs in their classrooms and to decide on the exact goals of the school. This educational philosophy had been reinforced by /I/D/E/A/ in sessions which were devoted to the topic of leadership in innovative schools. As measured by the Differential Values Inventory, Sociability referred to the degree to which an individual allowed himself to be part of a frictionless group. Relative Morality, as measured by the instrument, referred to the degree to which an individual was influenced by other people's concepts of right and wrong. Because principals felt comfortable allowing teachers to set their own goals which were right for them, and also enjoyed being a member of the group rather than the leader who directed the group, the high scores of the League principals on the two emergent dimensions of Sociability and Relative Morality were not surprising.

No significant difference was found in the congruency of values

among teachers, principals, and parents in the successful and unsuccessful goal-attaining schools. Therefore, there seems to be no relationship between congruency of values and the ability of schools to achieve goals. Other variables within a school setting, rather than the values of its staff and community, should be explored in order to predict and explain success in achieving prescribed goals.

In this study no correlation (either positive or negative) was found between values of either parents or teachers and such variables as family income, educational attainment, or number of organizations to which one belongs. While Spindler assumed that older teachers would be more traditional in their values than younger teachers,[10] in this study there was no correlation between age and values. Schools A and I both had values which were more traditional than the total sample of teachers' values. Yet School A had the oldest teaching staff of the eight League Schools, and School I had the youngest teaching staff.

The researcher also analyzed the data specifying the extent of contact (in letters, personal visits, and by phone) parents and teachers had with one another. This study found that teachers stated they had more contact with parents than parents indicated they had contact with teachers. This result implies that educators were reaching only a small segment of their school-communities. In other words, teachers in an individual school may on the average have made twenty telephone calls to parents over a period of a year; however, some of these parents were called more than once. Thus, the teachers did not on the average call twenty different parents. Therefore, teachers were overestimating the number of contacts they had with their school-communities.

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS:

The major finding of this study was that a congruency of values among parents, teachers, and principals is not essential if a school is to be successful in achieving its goals. Other variables such as the leadership in the school[11] as well as the adaptation of teachers to their teaching roles[12] may have a direct effect on whether or not a school organization will be successful in attaining its goals.

However, I would like to make the following recommendations which are the result of having spent one year in analyzing the values of parents, teachers, and principals in eight elementary schools and their communities.

1. In order to facilitate effective communication between educators and parents, both should have an awareness and an understanding of each other's values.

If public education is to survive, then schools must take into account what values the public holds sacred. Goals initiated in schools, which reflect only the values of school personnel and disregard the values of parents whose children attend the school, should not be part of public institutions. For example, the goal of the school could be self-direction of each child, and by that goal teachers might mean children should be allowed to involve themselves in whatever activities they desire. However, having self-direction as a goal, the school might be in opposition to its community which could hold the value of Future-Time Orientation as central to their lives. Therefore, in order to preserve the purpose and meaning of public education, the goal of self-direction would have to be defined as meaning to allow children some choices in their activities

but providing enough guidance in order to teach children to make a "wise" decision.

Knowing the values of their school-community is advantageous to teachers in order to prevent any wrong perceptions of their community. In this study, many teachers perceived their schools' parents inaccurately because they had stereotyped them into an unflattering image. In Schools A and G, some teachers viewed the parents in their schools' communities as having emergent values, i.e., as having a relative sense of morality and being present-time oriented. A large percentage of the families in School A's community was Spanish-speaking, and the teachers felt that these families were not as hard working and future-time oriented as the teachers in the school. The results from the Differential Values Inventory showed just the reverse to be true. The parents had more of a traditional set of values than the teachers. Therefore, teachers in School A began expecting certain types of behavior from parents. When children were late to school or even absent from class, some teachers concluded that these families did not respect education. They also began placing limitations upon the children, since they felt that they understood what these families considered as important.

2. <u>In order for schools to attempt to innovate or change, the administrator's values should be at least as emergent as those of his teaching staff</u>.

If administrators are truly encouraging teachers to institute change within schools, they must allow teachers to set goals for the schools. Also, for change to take place, teachers must have the freedom to experiment and to innovate on their own. Because in these schools necessity warrants freedom for the teaching staff, the administrator must play the

role of a group member rather than that of a group leader. He must help teachers establish goals for new programs, but he must act only as one member of the group. Individuals with values such as Sociability and a flexible standard of morality tend to do well in this type of situation. Because they believe that they should be part of a frictionless group, that right and wrong are defined by the group, and that conformity is, in many instances, advantageous, these individuals work well in activities that require group action. For change or innovation to take place, the members of the group together must fulfill the leadership role.

However, in innovative schools, where the teaching staff has a more traditional set of values than the principal, there may develop in the school a leadership vacuum. Even though the teachers and the principal together are fulfilling the leadership role, there still is needed, in some areas when dealing with each teacher individually, a principal who is the chief leader. This need becomes augmented in individuals whose values are highly traditional.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY:

In concluding this paper, I would like to present the following recommendations for further study in the area of values in a school setting.

1. Because the nine schools in this study represented a special sample of elementary schools, a similar research design should be used to measure the values of principals, teachers, and parents in a group of randomly selected schools. There is a need to establish in schools which are in no way unique whether or not the principals have more of an emergent set of values than teachers. There is also a need to discover whether

there are any communities in which parents have more of an emergent set of values than teachers and principals.

2. The present study measured the values of principals, teachers, and administrators because these three groups play the major roles in an elementary school setting. However, if high schools are studied, one additional group must be measured -- the students. Because the students in an elementary school are too young to have developed a set of values independent from their parents, there was no need to include them in the study. However, high school students have begun to develop their own set of values. Thus, they would have to be included in any study measuring values in a high school setting.

The addition of high school students complicates the school situation greatly. While elementary schools have only one group of clients with which to deal, high schools have two sets of clients -- parents and students. Researchers should investigate the effect on high schools when their clients have contrasting sets of values. For example, parents may have a traditional set of values, and students may have an emergent set of values. The needs of both these clients, because they have differing values, may well be incompatible, and the school could be torn between meeting the needs of both its clients.

3. The Differential Values Inventory should be used for future studies investigating the traditional or emergent values of individuals. However, one major modification of the instrument is recommended. In this study the researcher showed that the technique using weighted means (taking into account whether the choice of each paired item was difficult or easy) and the technique using tally means (ignoring whether the choice was difficult or easy) correlated more highly together for parents than

teachers. From this result one concludes that parents are much more definite about their value orientations than teachers. Unlike parents, teachers were indicating that many of the choices between paired items were difficult. As a result, any future uses of the Differential Values Inventory with teachers and principals should give the respondents an opportunity to indicate whether the choice between pairs of items was difficult or easy.

FOOTNOTES

1. Arthur Berchin, "Congruency of Values Among Teachers, Principals, and Parents and Its Relationship to the Goal-Attaining Process" (unpublished Doctor's dissertation, University of California at Los Angeles, 1970).

2. Philip E. Vernon and Gordon W. Allport, "A Test for Personal Values," Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, Volume XXVI, Number 3 (October-December, 1931), pp. 231-248.

3. See the following two studies which used this instrument to measure values: (a) Robert Jacques Currie, "Value Orientations of Parents of Academically Successful and Unsuccessful Children" (unpublished Doctor's dissertation, University of Southern California, 1966) and (b) Donald George Lahr, "Time and Man-Nature Value-Orientations as Related to Sex Identity, Ethnic Identity, and Socioeconomic States and as Predictors of Academic Success" (unpublished Doctor's dissertation, University of Southern California, 1968).

4. Richard Prince, "A Study of the Relationships Between Individual Values, Educational Viewpoint, and Local School Approval" (unpublished Doctor's dissertation, University of Chicago, 1957).

5. Clyde Kluckhohn, "Values and Value-Orientations in the Theory of Action," in Talcott Parsons and Edward Shils, eds., Toward a General Theory of Action, (Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press, 1954, p. 395.

6. George D. Spindler, "Education in a Transforming American Culture," Harvard Educational Review, Volume XXV (Summer, 1955), p. 149.

7. David Riesman, The Lonely Crowd, (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1950).

8. The following studies have used the Differential Values Inventory as the major instrument to measure values: (a) Roderick F. McPhee, "The Relationship Between Individual Values, Educational Viewpoint, and Local School Approval" (unpublished Doctor's dissertation, University of Chicago, 1959); (b) Max G. Abbott, "Values and Value-Perceptions of School Superintendents and Board Members" (unpublished Doctor's dissertation, University of Chicago, 1960); (c) Alfred John Price, "A Study of the Interactions of Attitudes and Values of Elementary Principals and Their Staffs" (unpublished Doctor's dissertation, Northwestern University, 1961); (d) Dante Lupini, "Values and Social Behavior," The Canadian Administrator, Volume V, Number 2 (November, 1965); (e) Robert Philip Stromberg, "Value Orientation and Leadership Behavior of School Principals" (unpublished Doctor's dissertation, Pennsylvania State University, 1966); (f) Nathan Teal Helm, "An Analysis of Value Patterns of Selected Junior High School Students of Varying Degrees of Academic Achievement and of Differing

Socio-Economic Backgrounds" (unpublished Doctor's dissertation, University of Utah, 1966); (g) Robert Elliott Ripley, "Traditional and Emergent Value Orientations of Teacher-Education Students" (unpublished Doctor's dissertation, University of Minnesota, 1967); (h) Bernice Jacklyn Lyons McAllister, "Educators and Traditional-Emergent Values" (unpublished Doctor's dissertation, Stanford University, 1967); (i) Gale W. Rose, "Staff Values, Organizational Behavior, and Pupil Response in Schools" (unpublished Doctor's dissertation, University of Chicago, 1966); (j) Ronald Leon Stafford, "Mobility and Its Effect upon Student Values, Social Integration, and Interpersonal Orientation" (unpublished Doctor's dissertation, University of Oklahoma, 1968); (k) David Lawrence Killian, "The General Social Values of Elementary School Teachers and Principals and the Acceptance of the Elementary Principal as Leader" (unpublished Doctor's dissertation, University of Michigan, 1968).

9. Spindler, Op. Cit., p. 151.

10. Spindler, Ibid.

11. Charles Wall, "Perceived Teacher Behavior of the Elementary School Principal as Related to Educational Goal Attainment" (unpublished Doctor's dissertation, University of California at Los Angeles, 1970).

12. William Michael Martin, "Role Conflict and Deviant Adaptation as Related to Educational Goal Attainment: A Social Systems Approach" (unpublished Doctor's dissertation, University of California at Los Angeles, 1970).